

## 1801 CHILD MATCHING PROCESS FOR ADOPTION AND PERMANENT PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN

Chapter: **Adoption and Post-Adoption Supports**

Section: **Adoption**



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

Policy Directive: **08-22**

Effective Date: **November 26, 2008**

Scheduled Review Date:

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maggie Bishop".

Maggie Bishop, DCYF Director

Related Statute(s): [RSA 169-C](#), [RSA 170-B](#), and [RSA 170-E](#)

Related Admin Rule(s):

Related Federal Regulation(s): [SSA 422](#), [SSA 471](#), [SSA 472](#), [SSA 473](#), [SSA 475](#), [CFR 1355.38](#), and [CFR 1356.21](#)

Related Form(s): **FORM 2162, FORM 2163, FORM 2354, and FORM 2550**

Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

### Purpose

This policy describes the process for selection of the family for a child in out-of-home care who cannot safely return to their family of origin and who may not be currently in a family placement that can assure permanency for the child. Selecting the most appropriate family for a child, who cannot safely return home, can reduce the trauma of separation and loss for the child, increase the probability of a successful placement and become a permanent home for the child.

### Definitions

**"Child/Youth Matching Profile"** (Form 2550) means a written description of the child's permanent placement needs including but not limited to: age, gender, race, sibling contact/placement, recommended family contact, and legal status.

**"Foster and Adoptive Family Assessment"** (Form 2162) means a 2-page template with an attached 9-page guide completed by the Foster Care CPSW or assigned CPSW after the interviews with the family. This assessment is used to evaluate a prospective family who has shown an interest in becoming licensed to provide foster family care and/or adoption.

**"Transition Plan"** means a course of action to support the child and the identified family to meet the needs of the child and to facilitate the placement of the child into the permanent home. This plan will include specific roles, responsibilities and timeframes for achieving permanency.

**"Legally Free for Adoption"** means all parental rights to a child have been surrendered or involuntarily terminated or forfeited for both parents.

**"Child Matching Group"** means the DCYF staff members who participate in the child matching meeting for a child (ren) in out of home care who cannot return to the family of origin.

**"Permanency Planning Team (PPT)"** means a group of DCYF/DJJS staff that meet, at least monthly: to develop permanency action plans for children and youth in out-of-home care and to provide consultation and planning to CPSW/JPPD case managers concerning permanency issues.

**"Placement Agreement"** means a written document developed by DCYF in coordination with the identified family to determine what supports and services are needed for the child and family in

order to transition and maintain the child into the home. This agreement clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of DCYF and the family.

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| <b>Policy</b> |
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- I. The Permanency Planning Team will determine when a child matching meeting needs be held.
- II. The child matching meeting must be considered if:
  - A. A child has been placed in a foster home that is not a potential adoptive home and:
  - B. Both parents have surrendered their parental rights but the court has not given its final approval;
  - C. One parent is willing or has surrendered his or her parental rights and the other parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown;
  - D. The parent is known, but has been uninvolved;
  - E. The termination of parental rights (TPR) has been granted but is being appealed; or
  - F. The TPR has been filed.
- III. A child matching meeting will be convened to select the most appropriate permanent/adoptive placement for the identified child.
- IV. The child matching group will include:
  - A. The Permanency Supervisor and/or CPSW supervisor;
  - B. The Permanency Worker;
  - C. The CPSW case manager for the child;
  - D. The Foster Care Licensing Worker;
  - E. Foster Care Licensing Workers from other District Offices who have families being presented;
  - F. Adolescent workers are invited to attend all of the matching meetings and they are especially invited to attend when the child is 13 years old or older;
  - G. Others, including agency providers, as determined by the Permanency Supervisor.
- V. Information for the child matching group to consider may include but is not limited to:
  - A. The Foster Parent Profile (Form 2354);
  - B. Foster and Adoptive Family Assessment and updates (Form 2162);
  - C. Autobiography of Foster and Adoptive Parents (Form 2163);
  - D. Child Information Sheet;

- E. Child/Youth Matching profile (Form 2550);
  - F. Information from individuals formerly connected to the child, e.g. former foster placements, respite providers, supportive adults, and extended family; and
  - G. Other documentation, e.g. psychological evaluations, provider reports, IEP plans.
- VI. The Permanency Supervisor will approve Foster and Adoptive Family Assessments from their office prior to their distribution to other offices.
- VII. Studies submitted are child specific and families are not being considered for any other children without the permission of the DO who licensed the family.
- VIII. The child matching group will:
- A. Identify the child's current and future needs, which may include, but are not limited to; services, childcare, after school programs, respite, medical, dental and mental health care.
  - B. Determine whether the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies to the child.
    - 1. An "Indian child" is defined as any unmarried person who is under age eighteen and is either (a) a member of an Indian tribe or (b) is eligible for membership in an Indian tribe and is the biological child of a member of an Indian tribe."
    - 2. If it is determined that ICWA applies, implement the following:
      - (a) Provide information about ICWA to the family.
      - (b) Notify the child's tribe and the child's parents of the child custody proceeding.
      - (c) Identify a placement that fits under the ICWA preference provisions.
      - (d) Work actively to involve the child's tribe and the child's parents in the proceedings.
  - C. Make placement decisions in accordance with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA). The race, color, or national origin of a child or of a prospective parent cannot be used to make the child ineligible for foster care or adoption, or to deny a particular foster care or adoptive placement.
    - 1. Efforts must be made to diligently recruit foster and adoptive parents who reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in the state who need foster and adoptive homes. At the same time there must not be a delay in selecting a family for the purpose of finding a racial or ethnic match.
  - D. Determine which connections with parents, siblings, relatives and community contacts should be maintained.
  - E. Determine the type of family that will provide the optimum environment for the development of the child.
  - F. Select the family with whom the child should be matched from the families presented, or;

- G. If a family cannot be identified as a permanent placement resource, the team will determine what further search for families is necessary.
- H. The Permanency Worker will document the outcome and timeframes of the meeting in Bridges.

### **Procedures**

- I. The PPT team determines the need for the child matching meeting.
- II. A child matching meeting will be scheduled within 30 calendar days of PPT meeting.
- III. CSPW (for the child to be matched) will provide the Child/Youth Profile to the Permanency Worker in their D.O. within two business days after the PPT meeting.
- IV. Permanency Worker will distribute the Child/Youth Matching Profile (Form 2550) to the Matching Group members upon receipt from the CPSW.
- V. The Permanency Worker will forward the profile to the Permanency Program Specialist and Foster Care Specialist upon receipt.
- VI. Permanency Program Specialist will forward the profile to Permanency Workers at each district office upon receipt.
- VII. Foster Care Specialist will forward the profile to all Foster Care Licensing Workers in each district office upon receipt. The Foster Care Specialist will forward the Child/Youth Matching Profile (Form 2550) to the ISO providers by request only if this referral is a recommendation of the PPT team.
- VIII. Foster Care Licensing Worker from each receiving D.O. forwards up-to-date information regarding appropriate foster families to the requesting Foster Care Licensing Worker, and Permanency supervisor within 5 business days of the request.
- IX. The Foster Care Licensing Workers, who provide Foster and Adoptive Family Assessments to the requesting office, will be available for the child matching meeting.
- X. The Foster Care Licensing Worker from the requesting D.O. will distribute all the home studies received, within 2 business days, to the child matching members.
- XI. The child matching group will read the available information and be prepared to discuss the qualities, values and characteristics of the selected families.

### **Child Matching Meeting Process**

- I. The child matching meeting process includes the following steps:
  - A. The permanency worker, who will lead the discussion of the child's needs for placement, facilitates the child matching group meeting.
  - B. Discussion about the type of family that can meet the identified needs of the child takes place;
  - C. Discussion takes place about the families that have been submitted who can provide the optimum environment for the child's developmental level;

- D. Identification of the family best suited to meet the needs of the child is decided by the consensus of the child's matching group.
- E. When a family is selected, the group will identify what supports or services should be put in place to enhance the family's ability to care for the child.
- F. Develop a plan and timeframe of who will present the child to the selected family.
- G. Contact the selected family within 2 business days of the matching meeting and schedule a meeting to present the child to the family within 5 business days.
- H. Identify an alternate family in the event that the selected family cannot accept the placement of the child, and document necessary tasks and timeframes to present the child to the alternative family if needed.
- I. When a family has accepted placement of the child, the foster care licensing worker from the district office in need of a family will notify the other licensing workers who submitted families, that their families were not a match for the child.
- J. Before ruling out all families, assess whether supports could be put into place to enable a family to parent the child.
- K. If no family can be identified, determine what other recruitment efforts could be made to find a suitable family.

#### **Working With The Selected Family**

- I. The CPSW for the child and another member of the team are designated to present the child to the selected family. A staff person who is familiar with the family and who may be the permanency worker or the foster care worker may accompany the CPSW.
- II. The CPSW for the child along with the assistance of other child matching group members, as necessary, will provide the family with sufficient information about the child in order for the selected family to make a decision to accept the child for placement. Informational items may include, but are not limited to, the child information sheet, medical and educational information, the adoptive history if available, photos and/or a video of the child.
- III. The child matching group will determine what follow up is necessary to address questions the foster parents have and facilitate any communication with collateral contacts with foster parents in order to answer any questions regarding the placement needs.
- IV. The family will be given up to one week to decide if they would like to proceed with placement.
- V. The CPSW, with the assistance of the child matching group, will develop a transition plan and/or placement agreement to present to the family and revised if necessary. Prior to finalizing the transition plan, a copy of this plan will be provided to the permanency supervisor for review and approval.
- VI. A CPSW and other child matching group member's tasks, timeframes, family visits and responsibilities must be identified in the transition plan that supports the family.